

ABSOLUTE BATMAN



ALL IN

15+
TEEN+

18



SNYDER
CANETE
MARTIN



NEXT
LEVEL

MARCH

FROM THE EISNER-NOMINATED TEAM OF
WRITER **SKOTTIE YOUNG** AND ARTIST **JORGE CORONA**

LOBO

#1



© & TM DC.

THE MAIN MAN'S BACK, BABY!

OUTSIDE LINCOLN,
NEW MEXICO.

BRUCE?

IT'S MOM, HONEY.
I'M NOT SURE IF THIS
MESSAGE WILL GO THROUGH,
BUT I'M GOING TO BE OUT OF
TOWN FOR A BIT. THERE ARE
SOME...THINGS I NEED TO
TAKE CARE OF.

JUST KNOW
THAT YOU'LL
ALWAYS BE MY LITTLE
BOY AND I LOVE YOU AND
DON'T YOU EVER **CHANGE**
FOR ANYONE, YOU
HEAR ME? THIS
WORLD MIGHT--

BEEP

#%@&!

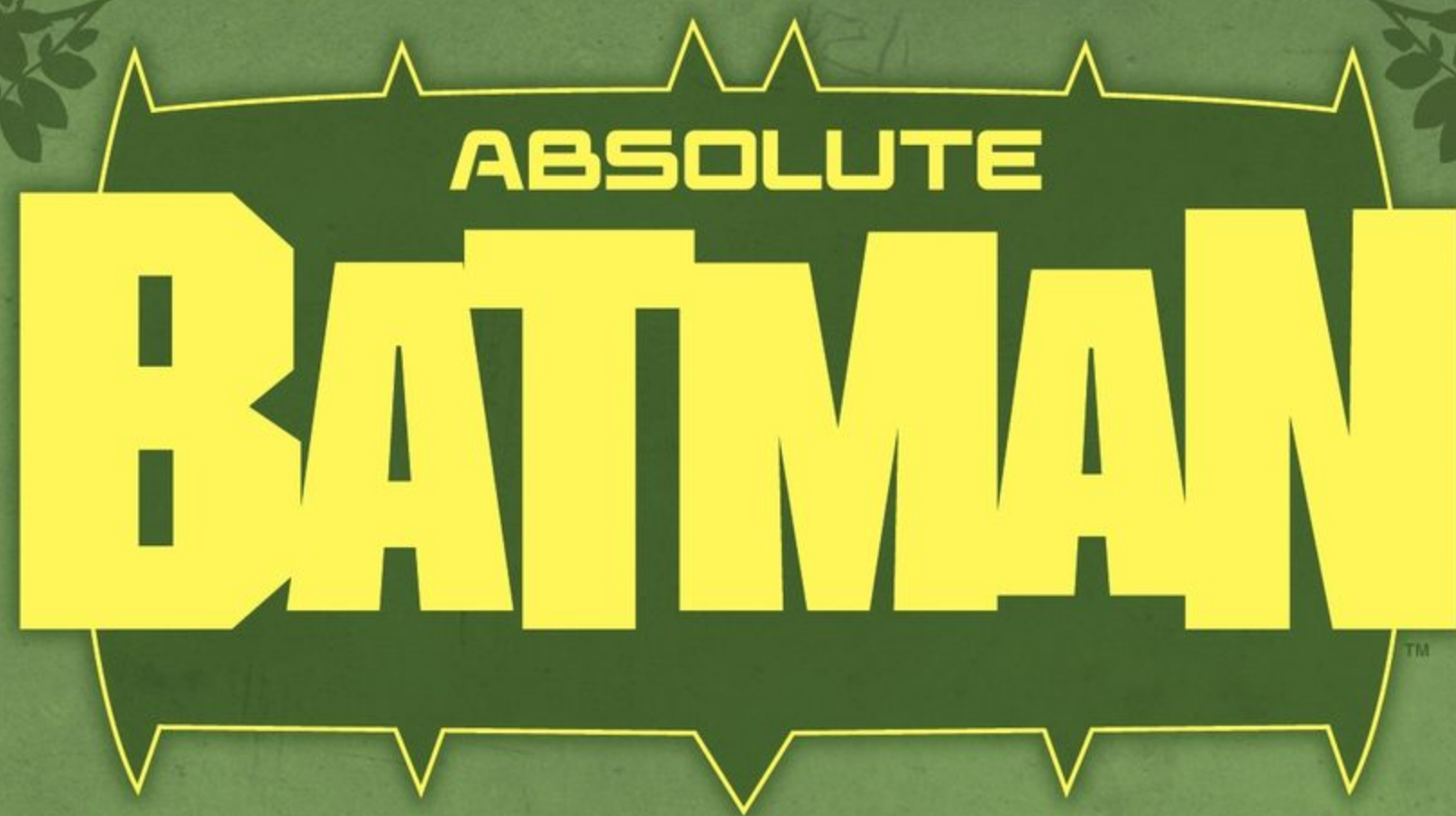
"WE WATCH
YOU AT YOUR
HEARTH, WE
WATCH YOU IN
YOUR BED..."

"SPEAK
NOT A
WHISPERED
WORD OF
US..."

"OR WE'LL SEND
THE **TALON** FOR
YOUR HEA--"

SKREEE

MMPH!



ABSOLUTE BATMAN

THE SEVENTH KINGDOM – PART 2

SCOTT SNYDER
WRITER

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GUEST ARTIST

FRANK MARTIN
COLORIST

CLAYTON COWLES
LETTERER

NICK DRAGOTTA AND FRANK MARTIN
COVER

**MAHMUD ASRAR & MIKE SPICER,
DECLAN SHALVEY, GIUSEPPE CAMUNCOLI &
FRANK MARTIN**
VARIANT COVERS

CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO
1:25 VARIANT COVER

SABRINA FUTCH
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KATIE KUBERT
EDITOR

**BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER**



COME NOW,
BATMAN. DON'T
FIGHT.

THERE'S
NO POINT.

KID, THE DENSITY
OF THE **SPORES** UP
THERE--ZZZZTTT--THAT
COWL COMES OFF, YOU'LL
HAVE MOMENTS BEFORE YOU'RE
COMPROMISED! YOUR
GENETICS WILL BE
HERS TO SHAP--

THEN IT
WON'T COME
OFF!



NOW FIND ME
A WEAKNESS!

LOOK
OUT! ON YOUR
RIGHT!



ON YOUR
LEFT!



AND ON
YOUR RIGHT AND
YOUR LEF--

WEAKNESSES,
PENNYWORTH! #&\$%&
WEAKNESSES!



SHE'S MADE
OF PLANT, ANIMAL,
INSECT, BACTERIA--
WHICH PART HAS A
VULNERABILITY?



I'M
LOOKING, KID,
BUT IF THERE'S
A SOFT SPOT TO
HER, I'M NOT
SEEING IT.



"**THIS** IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HER."

THAT'S WHAT THE DOCTORS TELL MY MOTHER.



"THE CHEMICAL FIRE IN THE LAB REACHED NEARLY NINE THOUSAND DEGREES, AS HOT AS A YOUNG STAR. IT'S A MIRACLE THAT ANYTHING AT ALL SURVIVED," THEY SAY. AND YET MY HEART APPEARS PERFECTLY INTACT.

MY MOTHER ASKS IF IT'S ALIVE. THEY TELL HER NO, BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE!

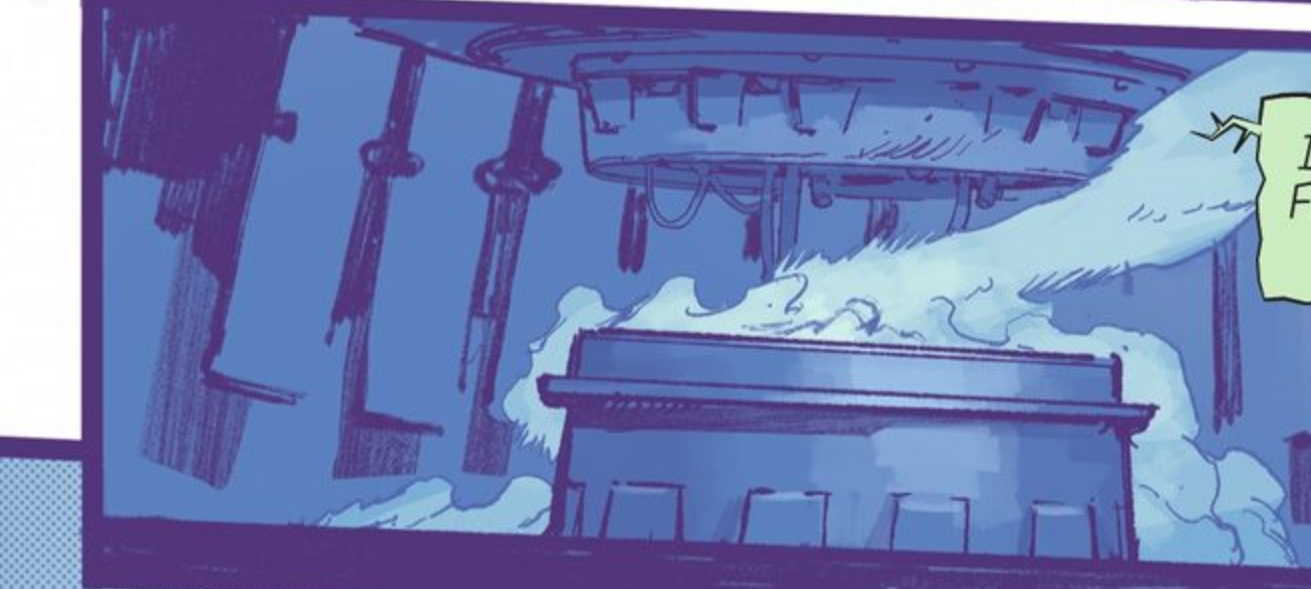


I WANT TO **SCREAM** TO HER THAT I'M MORE ALIVE INSIDE THIS CONTAINER THAN I'VE EVER BEEN! CONNECTED TO PRIMAL FORCES I DON'T UNDERSTAND YET BUT CAN FEEL AS COLORS...**GREEN** AND **RED** AND **BLACK**...

...MY MOTHER TURNS TO GO, AND IN THAT MOMENT, I **HATE** THE GLASS SEPARATING US MORE THAN I'VE EVER HATED ANYTHING. BUT NOT JUST THE GLASS--THE POWERFUL **MEN** WHO PUT IT THERE. THE MEN WHO DID THIS TO ME, ALL BECAUSE I WANTED TO GO FURTHER IN MY RESEARCH, **DO** MORE.



BUT THIS IS WHAT THEY DO, THOSE MEN. MY ENEMIES. **OUR** ENEMIES. PUT WALLS EVERYWHERE, WALLS OF EVERY KIND, DIVIDING US FROM EACH OTHER, FROM NATURE, FROM TRUTH... DIVIDING UP EVERYTHING, ALL FOR **PROFIT**. THEIR OWN TINY, PRIVATE **KINGDOM**.



I WILL GET OUT. I WILL FIND A WAY. IVY CLIMBS THE HIGHEST WALLS.

AS MY MOTHER WALKS AWAY, I REACH FOR HER.



I CAN SENSE THE **BLACK** CREEPING THROUGH HER. SHE WILL DIE THIS AFTERNOON, SITTING ON A BENCH, WAITING FOR THE BUS BACK TO THE HOSPICE.

NO ONE WILL NOTICE FOR ALMOST THREE DAYS. WHEN THE MORGUE THAWS HER OUT, PARTS OF HER FALL OFF--HER FINGERS, HER BREASTS, HER NOSE...LIKE ROTTED FRUIT.

BUT NOW, IN **THIS** MOMENT, I **REACH** AND **REACH** WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE...

...AND SUDDENLY SOMETHING **NEW** GROWS. SOMETHING THAT CAN'T BE HURT ANYMORE.

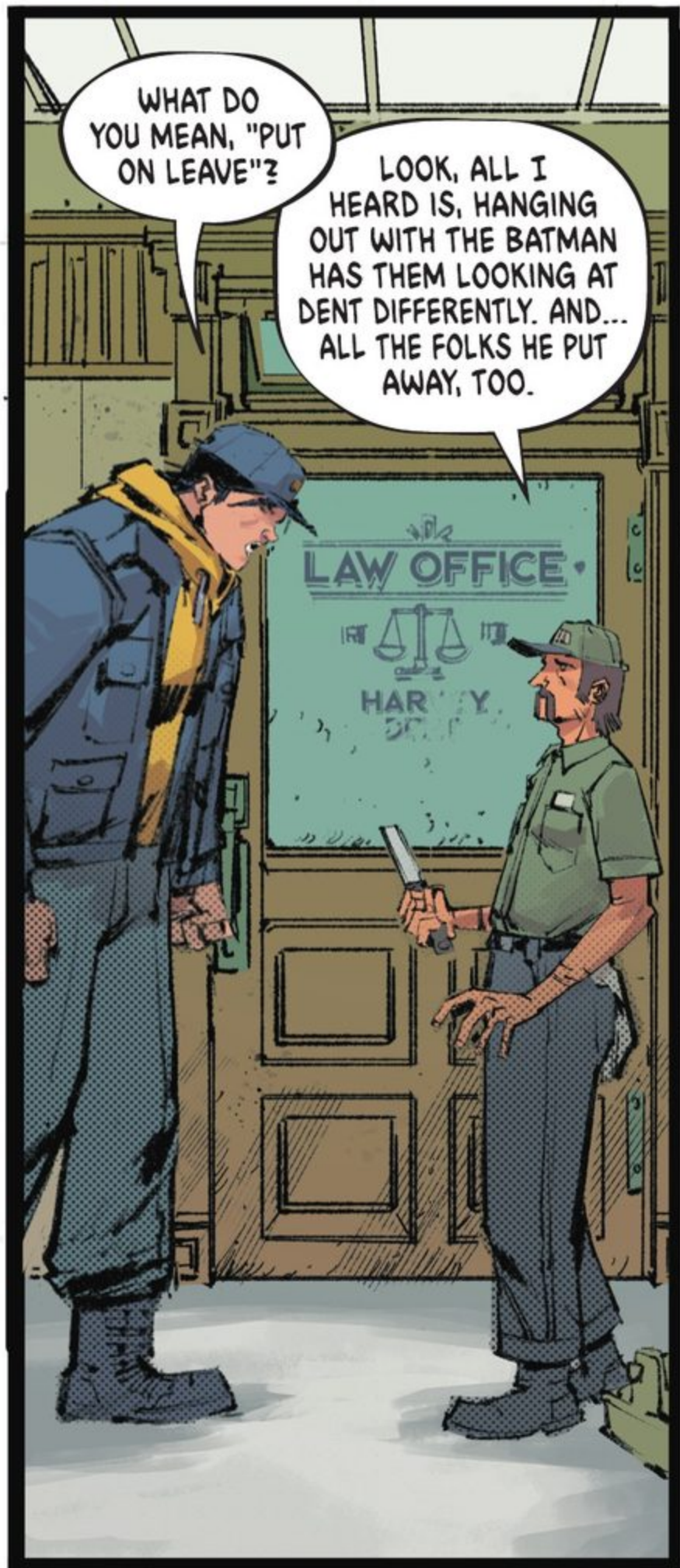


WHY ARE
YOU FIGHTING ME,
BATMAN? WE'RE
ON THE SAME
SIDE.

PENNYWORTH!

HE'S NOT
HERE ANYMORE,
I'M AFRAID. RARE FORMS
OF BACTERIA CAN DISRUPT
RADIO SIGNALS. AS CAN SOME
BIRD CALLS...AND EVEN DOLPHIN
SONGS...ALL OF WHICH I'M
EMITTING AS WE SPEAK.
NO "WEAKNESSES."
JUST **STRENGTHS.**

YOU CAN
BE SO MUCH MORE,
TOO. YOU'RE HALFWAY
THERE. YOU JUST
NEED TO EMBRACE
IT!



A close-up panel showing Batman's head being pierced by a sharp, yellow and red tentacle. The background is a solid red color.

I'LL TAKE
IT ALL AWAY,
BATMAN. THAT
SOFT PART,
THAT **PAIN**.

A large panel showing a giant, grey, mechanical hand crushing Batman. The hand is made of jagged, metallic pieces. In the background, a green alien with a purple flower on its head and long tentacles watches. The ground is covered in green and yellow debris.

WE'RE BECOMING
ONE, YOU AND ME...
I CAN **FEEL** HOW MUCH
YOU'RE HURTING. YOUR
MOTHER. YOUR
FRIENDS...

A panel showing Batman's head being crushed by the giant hand. The background is a solid red color.

GET
OUT OF MY
HEAD!

A panel showing the green alien's tentacles splashing in a pool of pink and purple liquid. The word "Splorp" is written twice in a stylized, pink font.

NO...JOIN ME. BE
MY KNIGHT.
TOGETHER WE CAN
BEAT THEM.



LOOK AT YOU. **SPINES** THAT STAB LIKE A CHOLLA CACTUS. **WINGS** THAT SLASH LIKE AN OSTRICH. THE WILL OF A VIRUS. JUST BREATHE ME IN.



PTU!!



HA. AND THE STUBBORNNESS OF A COCKROACH... ALL RIGHT, THEN. I'LL DRAG YOU INTO THE **LIGHT**, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.





THIS CITY IS AN ECOSYSTEM, A LIVING THING. YOU INTRODUCED SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING FOREIGN, AND NOW THE CITY IS REACTING.



BUT INSTEAD OF GOING FURTHER, YOU TRY TO HOLD IT BACK. EVEN NOW, LOOKING FOR THAT **WEAPON**. THE SCREAMING GUN BEHIND YOU...LIKE THE ONES THEY USE IN THAT **PLACE** TO SEPARATE MY CELLS...



STOP DENYING WHAT YOU WANT!

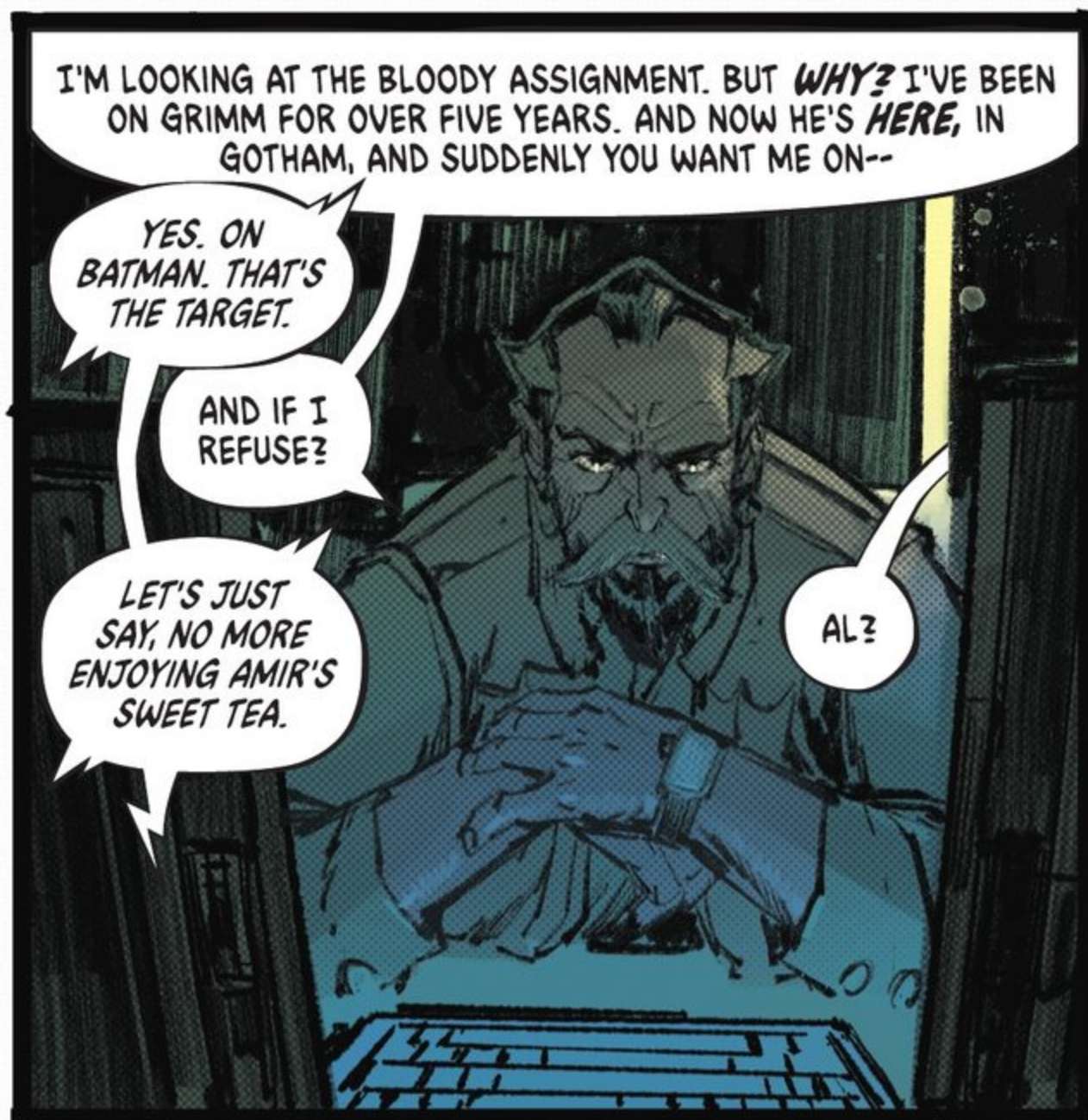
AAAGH!



YOU **WISHED** TO RESHAPE THINGS, JUST LIKE I DID. YOU BLEW THE SEEDS ACROSS THE CITY. BUT NOW YOU'RE AFRAID OF WHAT YOU'VE SOWN. WELL, **CHANGE** IS COMING, **WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!**



"THERE'S BEEN A SHIFT IN PLANS, AGENT PENNYWORTH. YOUR NEW ASSIGNMENT--"



I'M LOOKING AT THE BLOODY ASSIGNMENT. BUT *WHY?* I'VE BEEN ON GRIMM FOR OVER FIVE YEARS. AND NOW HE'S *HERE*, IN GOTHAM, AND SUDDENLY YOU WANT ME ON--

YES. ON BATMAN. THAT'S THE TARGET.

AND IF I REFUSE?

LET'S JUST SAY, NO MORE ENJOYING AMIR'S SWEET TEA.

AL?



MISS QUINN? HOW...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M HERE TO HELP. WITH THIS WHOLE "BATMAN THING."



WE ALL ARE.



ALL RIGHT, DICK. TOMORROW YOU *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT HIM.



AW, COME ON, BRUCE. WE'RE TRYING THAT NEW BATMAN-THEMED BAR ON 39TH. COME ON!

GREAT *BIG* WINGS.

I smile, tell them another time. I hope they can't see my fists shaking. I look at the sidewalk. They're two hundred years old...



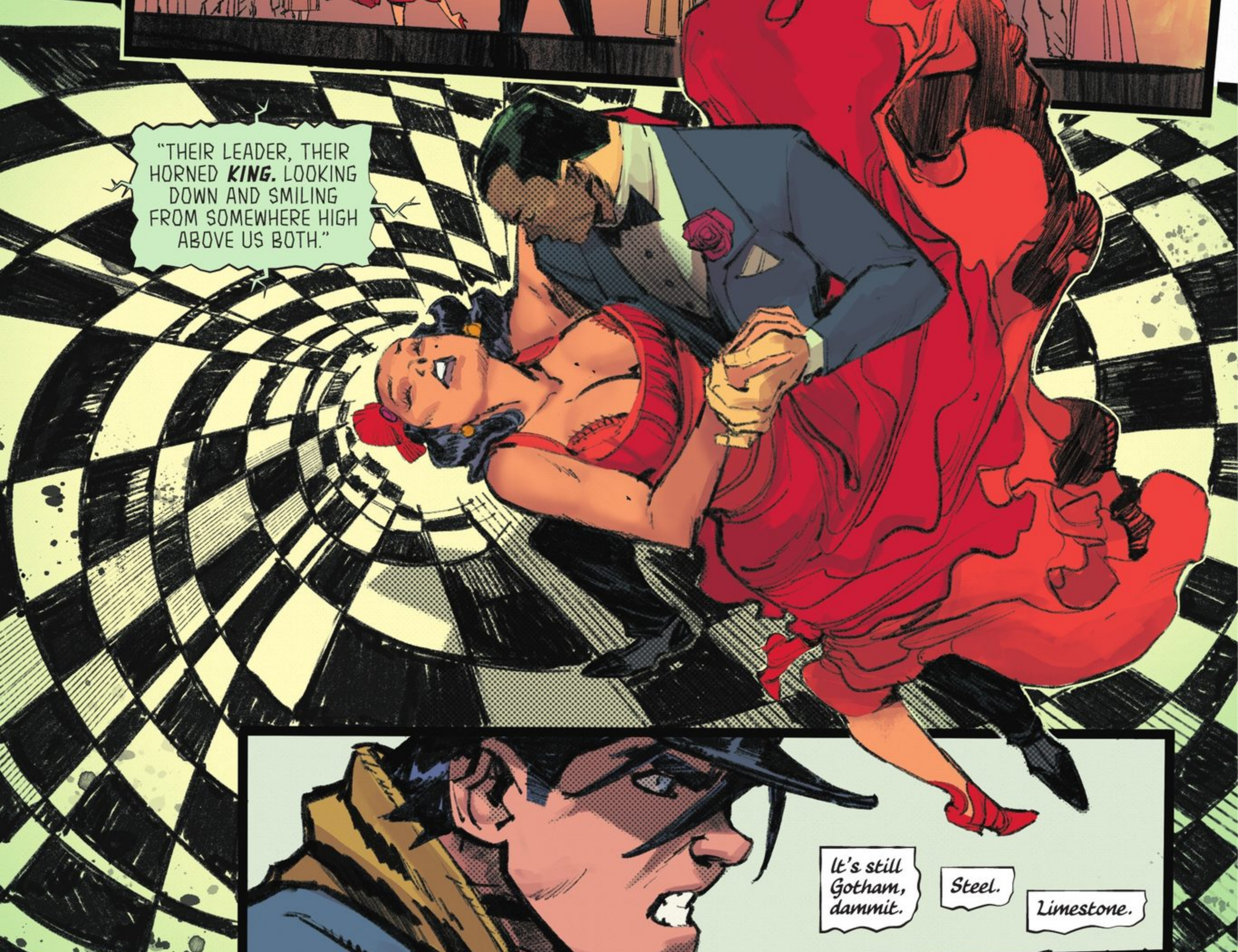
"YOU CAN WALK AROUND
WITH YOUR HEAD DOWN,
BLIND TO IT, WRITING
IN YOUR LITTLE BOOK,
BUT IT'S **HAPPENING**."



"AND **THEY** SEE IT, BELIEVE
ME. THE ONES WHOSE PLANS
YOU DISRUPTED. THE ONES
WHO **HATE** CHANGE."



"THE **WORST** OF
THEM IS HERE."



"THEIR LEADER, THEIR
HORNED **KING**. LOOKING
DOWN AND SMILING
FROM SOMEWHERE HIGH
ABOVE US BOTH."



It's still
Gotham,
dammit.

Steel.

Limestone.

THE TRICKS HE PLAYS, THE DEALS
AND PACTS AND BARGAINS. CARVING
UP THE WORLD WITH HIS MINIONS.
WE HAVE TO **STOP** HIM.

"I DIDN'T THINK HE **COULD** BE
STOPPED. ALL THOSE YEARS
HE KEPT ME LOCKED AWAY.
SCRAMBLED BY THOSE NOISE
GUNS, PULLED APART.

"BUT THEN ONE
DAY...THERE **YOU**
WERE. LIKE SOME
WILD BEAST
RUNNING NAKED
THROUGH MY
BIOME.

"AND I **KNEW**...IF
I HAD THE CHANCE,
I WOULD JOIN WITH
YOU. BECAUSE **GRIMM**...
HE'S COMING FOR
YOU, JUST LIKE HE
CAME FOR ME...

"...JUST LIKE HE COMES FOR
ANYTHING THAT THREATENS
CHANGE. ISOLATES IT. LOCKS IT
AWAY. HE'S MAKING MOVES AS
WE SPEAK. I CAN FEEL IT.

MAYBE IF YOU
WERE **WILLING** TO
EVOLVE ON YOUR OWN,
TO BECOME WHAT'S NEEDED,
YOU **MIGHT** BE ABLE TO
STOP HIM, BATMAN.

BUT YOU'RE
NOT. DON'T WORRY,
THOUGH...WHEN I RELEASE
THESE **SPORES**, FROM THIS
PLACE, I'LL **MAKE** YOU SOMETHING
NEW. I'LL MAKE EVERYONE NEW.
WE'LL BE STRONG, **BEAUTIFUL**...
A NEW KINGDOM. AND TOGETHER,
WE'LL STOP HIM! AND THEN
WE'LL MAKE THAT FIRST
WISH COME TRUE.

STOP.
UNH! DON'T
DO THIS!



YOU HEARD ME,
@#\$%&, I
SAID--

BRUCE! CALM
DOWN.

MR. GORDON?
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?

I NEED
TO TALK TO
YOU.



NO OFFENSE,
BUT THE LAST
THING I WANT
TO TALK ABOUT
IS YOU AND
MY MOM.

IT'S NOT
ABOUT YOUR
MOM.



SHE'S A
GROWN WOMAN,
I'M A GROWN MAN,
AND NATURE IS NATURE.
BUT THIS IS ABOUT
YOU, SON.

"ME"?

BRUCE,
I KNOW.

WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT? KNOW
WHAT?



OH.

WANT
TO SIT?



...
OKAY.



HOW DID YOU...

SON, SIX FOOT NINE AND FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS DOESN'T EXACTLY BLEND IN. AND I DID PULL YOU OUT FROM A PILE OF **BATS** ONE TIME.

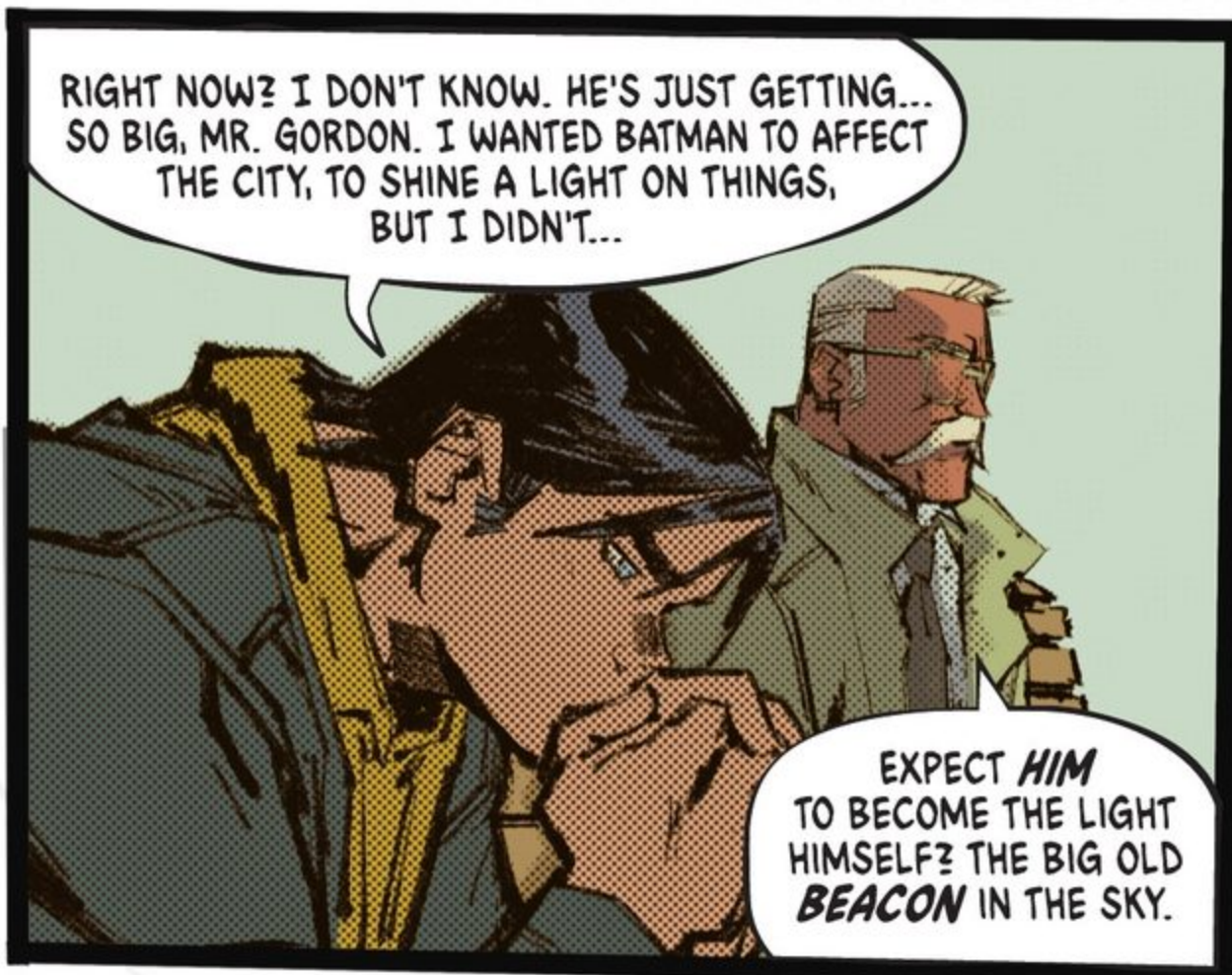


DOES MY MOM KNOW?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I DON'T THINK SO. HER BRAIN'S ENGAGED IN SOME OLYMPIC-LEVEL GYMNASTICS TO AVOID THE OBVIOUS. SELF-DEFENSE, I SUPPOSE.

ARE YOU HERE TO TELL ME TO STOP?

DO YOU WANT ME TO?



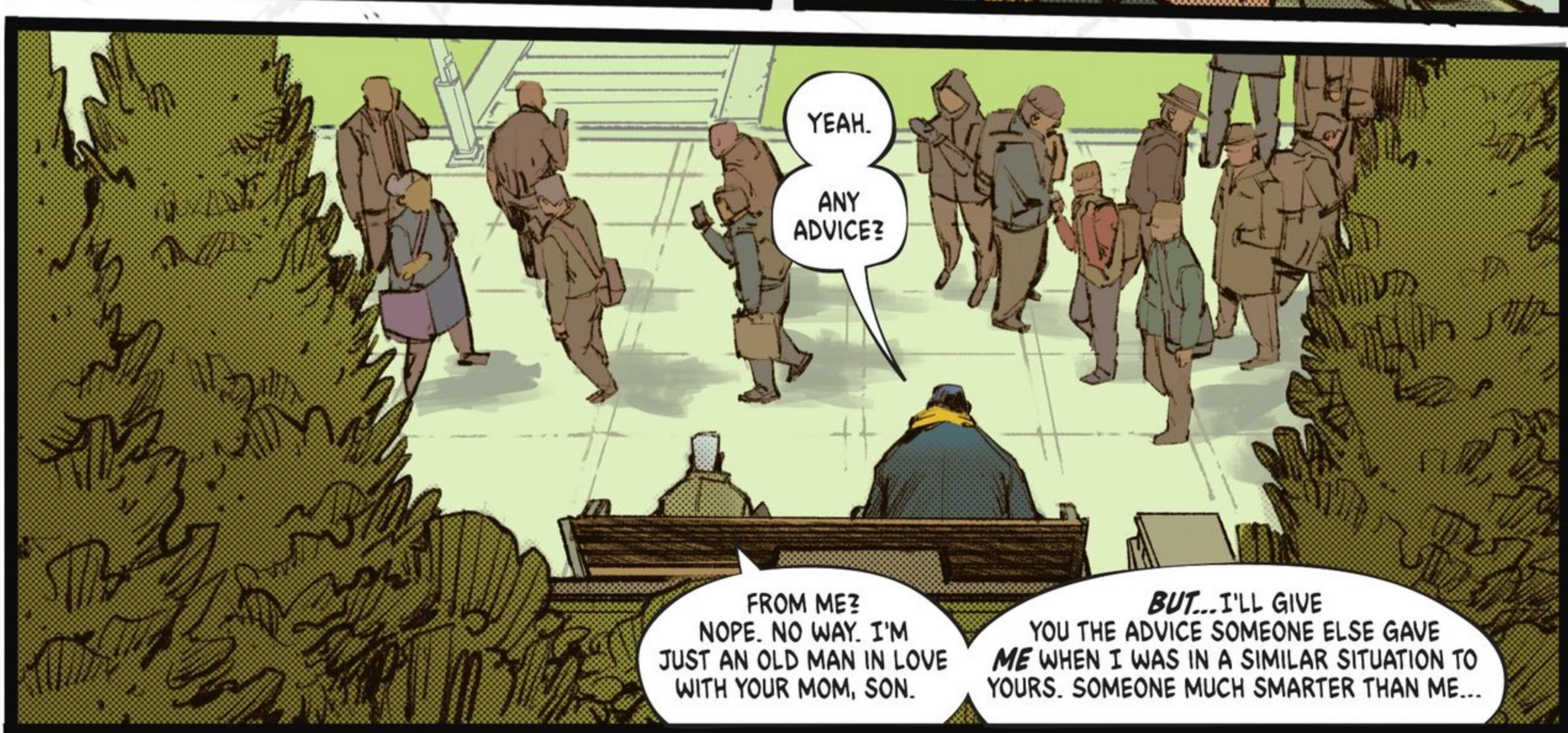
RIGHT NOW? I DON'T KNOW. HE'S JUST GETTING... SO BIG, MR. GORDON. I WANTED BATMAN TO AFFECT THE CITY, TO SHINE A LIGHT ON THINGS, BUT I DIDN'T...

EXPECT **HIM** TO BECOME THE LIGHT HIMSELF? THE BIG OLD **BEACON** IN THE SKY.



THE THINGS I'M UP AGAINST, TOO. IT FEELS LIKE TO WIN, I HAVE TO BECOME SOMETHING TOUGHER, MEANER...SOMETHING--

DARKER?



YEAH.

ANY ADVICE?

FROM ME? NOPE. NO WAY. I'M JUST AN OLD MAN IN LOVE WITH YOUR MOM, SON.

BUT... I'LL GIVE YOU THE ADVICE SOMEONE ELSE GAVE **ME** WHEN I WAS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION TO YOURS. SOMEONE MUCH SMARTER THAN ME...

"...MY
DAUGHTER."

NNNGH!

SSSHHH!
SHE'LL HEAR YOU.
STOP STRUGGLING.
I GOT YOU.

OFFICER
GORDON...?

YOU CAN
THANK ME BY SWEARING
NEVER TO PULL THAT KIND OF
@#%& AGAIN. NOW, S.W.A.T. IS
ABOUT TO BUST IN WITH A DOZEN
DOUBLE-AUGIED-UP M.U.C.S.,
SO WE NEED TO GET OUT OF
HERE BEFORE SHE FIGURES
OUT YOU'RE--

NO.

THE *SPORES*.
SHE'S GOING TO
RELEASE THEM
ACROSS THE
CITY.

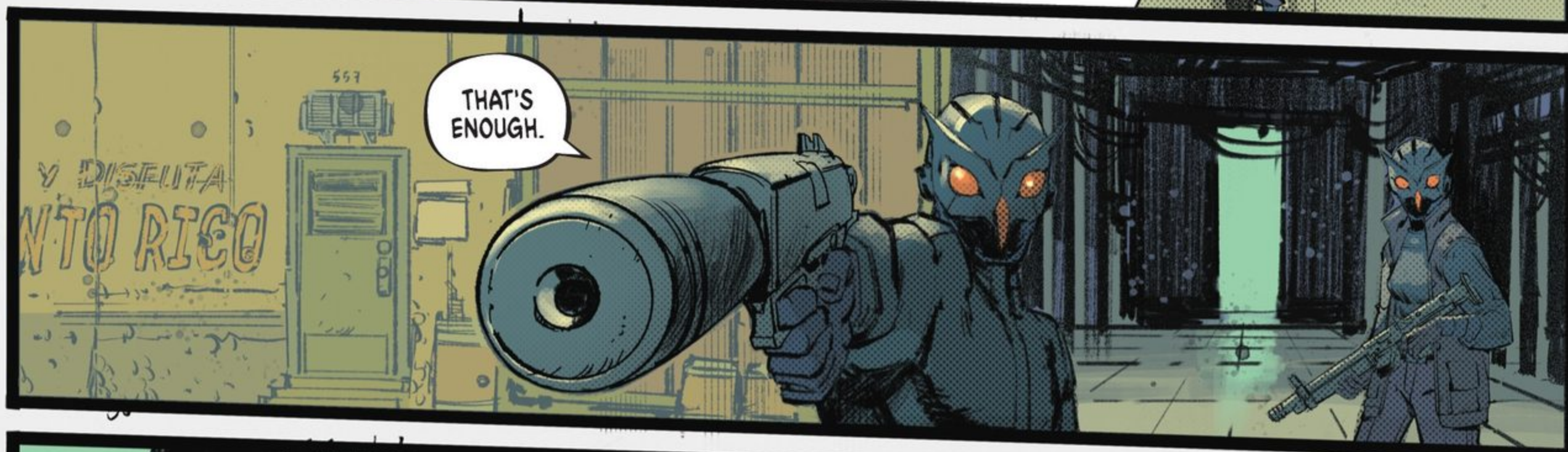
WE HAVE TO
DESTROY THEM.
I HAVE THE M.U.C. BUT
DO YOU HAVE ANY
EXPLOSIVES?

NO, BUT TWO
FLIGHTS DOWN,
I SAW--

THERE'S
NO TIME. BUT IF
WE CAN--

IF YOU
CAN DO *WHAT?*
WHAT CAN YOU
POSSIBLY
DO?

AND HERE
I THOUGHT WE
COULD BE *ALLIES*.
BUT I WAS
WRONG.



SKREEE!

BWAAAAAA

AAAAAA

AAAAAA

AAAAAA

AAAHH...

YOU THINK
THAT SOUND-GUN
CAN DESTROY
ME?!

NO, BUT IT
SHOWS ME WHAT
I SUSPECTED.

WHEN YOU BONDED
WITH ME EARLIER, I SAW...
DR. ISLEY. YOU WANT ME TO "EVOLVE,"
BUT YOU HAVEN'T GONE ALL THE
WAY YOURSELF.

WHAT ARE
YOU--

YOUR HEART.
LAST PIECE OF
YOUR HUMAN SELF.
YOU KEPT IT. THE
ONLY PART OF YOU
NOT REMADE.
I CAN SEE IT.
RIGHT THERE.

DESTROY THE
SPORES OR I'LL DESTROY YOUR
HEART. THE SONIC WAVES WILL DISPERSE THE
CELLS. YOU COULD REGROW IT, BUT IT WOULDN'T
BE **THAT** ONE. THE ONE YOUR MOTHER HELD.

WHAT WAS BARBARA'S ADVICE?

WHEN I BECAME MAYOR, I WAS TERRIFIED, BRUCE. I'D HAD **MY** PLAN, **MY** AGENDA, BUT SUDDENLY THE WHOLE CITY WAS LOOKING TO ME TO DO SO MUCH MORE. TO **BE** MORE. AND THE CRITICS, THEY KEPT ATTACKING ME FOR BEING TOO SOFT, TOO LOCAL, TOO MUCH OF A PEOPLE PERSON.

I WAS ALL TORN UP. MAYBE TO BE A GOOD MAYOR I HAD TO FORGET ALL THE HIPPIE-DIPPY STUFF YOUR DAD AND MOM AND I LOVED AND BECOME SOMETHING TOUGHER, COLDER, MEANER.

ONE NIGHT, BABS, SHE WAS SIXTEEN AT THE TIME, STUDYING FOR A BIOLOGY TEST. SHE FOUND ME ON THE BALCONY IN MY ROBE...STARING OUT AT THE CITY. AND SHE SAID SOMETHING TO ME.

IVY DOES CLIMB. BUT IT ALSO **CLINGS**. IT HOLDS ON, DR. ISLEY. YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT LAST PIECE OF YOURSELF, DO YOU?

WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS!

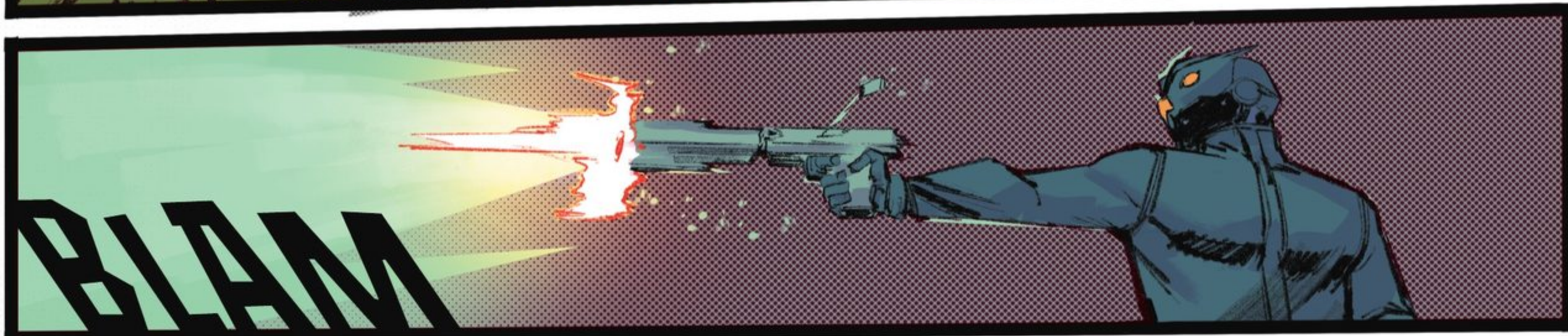
SHE SAID, "DAD, A TREE GROWS TALLEST WHEN YOU CARE FOR ITS ROOTS."

WE'RE IN!

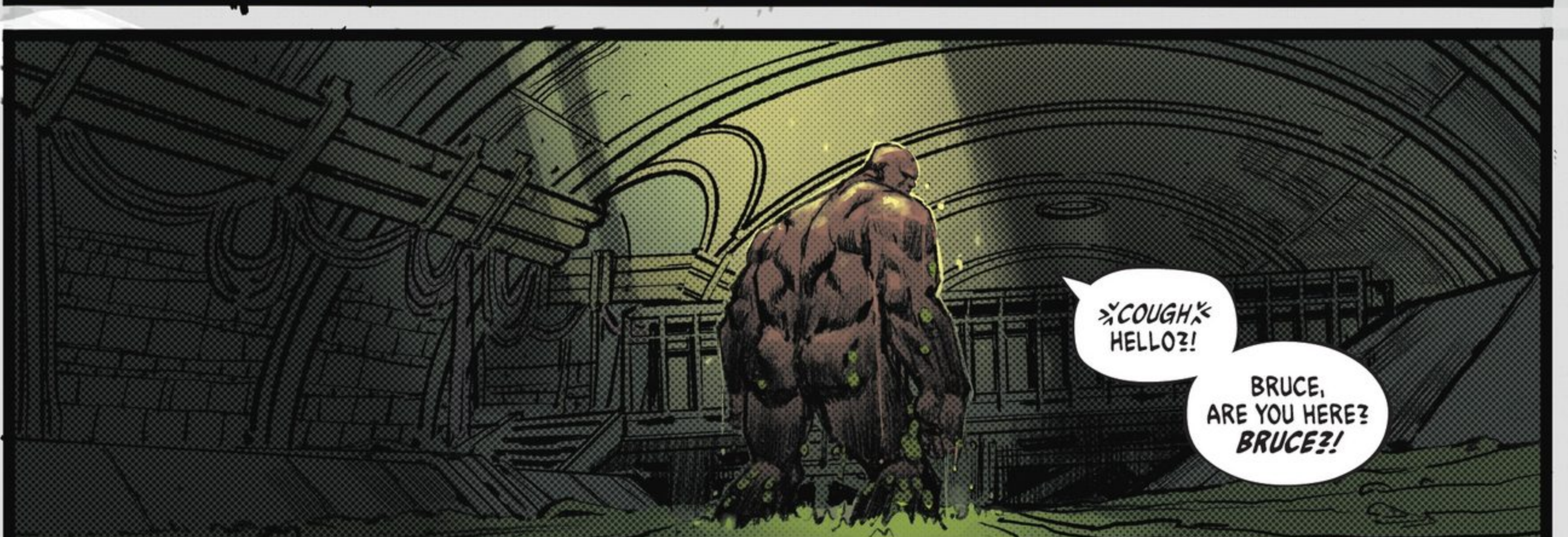
DESTROY THE SPORES, DR. ISLEY. NOW!

ALL RIGHT!











BRUCE?

IT'S
MOM, HONEY.
I'M--

DELETE
MESSAGE.

THE WONDER WAR BEGINS IN

#31

WONDER WOMAN

ALL HAIL THE MATRIARCH



ALL IN

Written by
TOM KING

Art by
DANIEL SAMPERE

ON SALE IN MARCH

© & TM DC.



THE MATRIARCH

INTERVIEW WITH TOM KING

The Matriarch has arrived in the pages of *Wonder Woman*, and she's here to change everything. Superstar writer Tom King reveals Diana's most ambitious villain yet, a royal force of nature with power to topple gods and heroes alike. As "The Wonder War" begins, this future-born conqueror promises an epic showdown that will redefine the Amazing Amazon's legacy.

What can you tell us about the creation of the Matriarch?

From the beginning my brilliant artist, Daniel Sampere, and I wanted to create a huge *Wonder Woman* villain that would be the focus of our arc. We very cleverly put her origin story on the very first page of the series, and nobody noticed, which was fun! We took 25 issues of story leading up to the launch of this character who is the pivotal villain of the whole series, and her name is the Matriarch.

How do you craft a villain worthy of Wonder Woman's legacy?

It's my chance to do a Lex Luthor. My chance to do a Joker. That's who the Matriarch is. People who are reading *Wonder Woman* today need an experience as big as the people who were reading *Batman* in the '30s or '40s. They deserve huge comics that aren't just looking backward, but looking forward.

What can fans expect as we head toward "The Wonder War"?

There's a lot more to come. We've been building on this. We created this character called the Sovereign, who may or may not be her father. You see her birth and the birth of Trinity around the same time. These two babies who start together becoming the greatest of adversaries in the future will be the driving force behind the comic. I couldn't be more excited for where this is going.

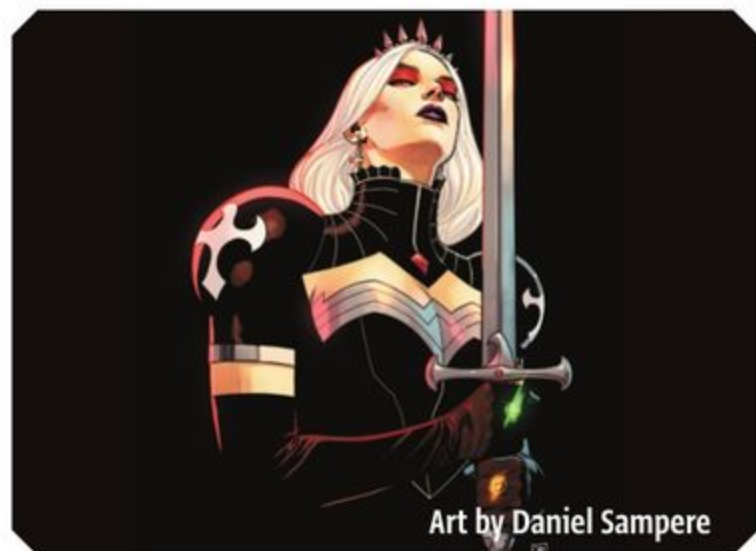
Can you share a bit about the character's design?

Daniel's design is perfect. I wanted her to look like an evil princess, or to have that sort of royalty to her. This look of "I've inherited the world and I can do anything."



Art by Jorge Fornés

What you started to see in issue #25, the big launch of this character, is she exists in the future. I was sort of inspired by the comics of my youth, where the great villains came from the future. In the future, she has left Themyscira, has conquered Earth, and has killed the Justice League. When you see each of their deaths, their last words to the Matriarch before they succumb to her total power are "Wonder Woman," who's the last hope against this villain.



Art by Daniel Sampere



Art by Daniel Sampere

DON'T MISS THE EPIC START OF "THE WONDER WAR" IN *WONDER WOMAN* #31, ON SALE IN MARCH!

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